

Confirmed minutes

Meeting:	Academic Committee
Date:	Friday 25 November 2022 12.00 pm to 1.30 pm: Lunch and meeting of the Academic Committee¹ 1.30 pm to 3 pm: Joint Meeting of the Board of Directors and Academic Committee
Venue:	12.00 pm to 3 pm: Malet Building MAL252

Name	Designation
John Fairhurst (Chair)	Managing Director and Academic Principal
Maria Jackson	Head of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
Anna Krajewska	Head of School of Business and Accounting; Director, CETL
Dr Joan O'Mahony	Director of Academic Development
Tom Ironmonger	Deputy Head of School; FY Course Leader
Slawomir Grzybek	Head of Quality
Dr Joe Stevens	Principal Lecturer in Law and LLB Course Leader
Dr Achila Amarasinghe	Deputy Head of School; Course Leader BM
Mubashir Qurashi	Accounting and Finance Course Leader and Principal Lecturer
John Adjei	Senior Lecturer and Academic Lead for Employability
Sarah Bailey	Director of the Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success
Donna Leonard	Foundation Year Deputy Course Leader; Academic Lead for Learning Enhancement
Dr Nnamdi Obiosa	Deputy Head of the School of Business and Accounting
Arif Zaman	Lecturer, Business
Dr Nandini Canoo*	EDI Academic Lead and Lecturer, FY
Ahmed Junaid	Academic Registrar
Ian Miller	Head of School of Law and Director, Bloomsbury Law Clinic
Kirsty Allison	Principal Lecturer and LLB Course Leader
Orlagh Maye	Lecturer, Law
Dr Michelle Morgan*	External Academic Advisor
Prof Gwyneth Pitt	External Academic Advisor
Marcia Barrant* Niromy	Student Council Student Representative from LLB Year 2 – UoN
Nilax Rajan* Abidur	Student Council Student Representation from LLB Year 1 - GU
Rahman* Veronica	Student Council Student Representative from Foundation Year
Wilson Ammar Syed	Student Council Student Representative from LLB Year 3 – UoN
Sayefaldeen Suleiman*	Student Council Student Representative AFM (1st Year)
Hristina Hristova	Student Council Student Representative from BABM Year 3 - UoN
Johana Petit-Frere	Student Council Student Representative from AFM Year 3 - UoN Secretary

In attendance

Name	Designation
Carol Cook	Non-Executive Director (Chair of the Board of Directors)
Keith Bartlett	Non-Executive Director
Melanie Fellowes	Non-Executive Director
Abdul Pisavadi	Non-Executive Director
Shabnam Karim	Finance Director
Trevor Bolton	Non-Executive Director

¹ Directors on the Board were invited to attend the meeting of the Academic Committee as an observer should they wish to do so.

Graeme Slater Head of Action Planning
Charlayne Lewis-Thomas Staff Representative (Admissions Manager)

No. Item

1.0 Welcome & Apologies

*Denotes apologies

**Did not attend not having sent apologies.

2.0 Minutes for approval and Action Tracker/Matters Arising:

2.1 Minutes from the previous meeting: 28 September 2022

The minutes of the September AC meeting were approved by the committee.

2.2 Action Tracker and Matters Arising

2.1.1 Minutes of 28 September 2022 AC

2.1.1.1 Item 7.0 refers

Completed: Additional data was brought to SMLT. A Continuation Group was established to consider continuation rates and implement actions.

3.0 Chair's Actions

There were no Chair's actions taken.

4.0 Academic Principal's Report

J Fairhurst reported the following

- Bloomsbury Institute has been successful in bidding for the OfS funding to renovate the computer lab situated in the Bedford Square building and develop it into a digital lab with a recording studio.
- Bloomsbury Institute was awarded the Staff Development Award from the Independent Higher Education (IHE).
- One of the deliverables resulting from the QAA collaborative project has been published on the QAA website, the remaining deliverables are due to be completed by March 2023.

Part 1: Academic Regulatory, Policy and Procedural Documents for Recommended Approval, Approval and Information.

5.0 For approval by AC

There were no items for approval.

Part 2: Non-academic Regulatory, Policy and Procedural Documents for Approval, Amendment and Information.

6.0 For discussion by AC

6.1 Welcome Back Survey Results

S Bailey informed the committee that the Welcome Back Survey has been redesigned and deployed between 31 October and 11 November 2022.

It was noted that 42 students completed the survey and that the responses were overall positive.

A further breakdown of the responses would be submitted in a detailed report to the January QAEC.

6.2 Initial Course Evaluation Results

S Grzybek informed the committee that parallel to the Welcome Back Survey, the Initial Course Evaluation was deployed to our new students. He explained that a detailed report would be submitted to the January QAEC but provided the following highlights:

- We received 170 responses.
- The Level 7 MBA/MSc students engaged very well with the survey.
- The responses from a large cohort of international students provided an interesting insight into their initial experience on the course.
- Most of the students stated they had developed a sense of belonging at Bloomsbury Institute.
- The vast majority of students who took part in the survey stated they had benefited from their induction.
- Overall, students were happy with their student experience so far.

S Grzybek also flagged that qualitative feedback provided us with some insight into issues pertaining to communication with professional staff services, timetabling, and ID cards.

7.0 For information only

7.1 Corporate Risk Register: September 2022

The committee received and noted the September Corporate Risk Register.

7.2 External Examiner Reports and External Examiner Response Forms 2021-22

J Fairhurst informed the committee that the QAEC has the role and responsibility to review External Examiner Reports when they are received. The QAEC approves the External Examiner Response Form that is sent to the external examiner by our awarding body. Both are also considered by the relevant Course Committee. If there are any actions, QAEC is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the actions.

The Academic Committee receives the External Examiner Reports and Response Forms for information.

7.2.1 Accounting and Financial Management: Syed Shah

The committee received and noted the Accounting and Financial Management: Syed Shah External Examiner Report and Response Form 2021-22.

7.2.2 Accounting and Financial Management: Xihui Chen

The committee received and noted the Accounting and Financial Management: Xihui Chen External Examiner Report and Response Form 2021-22.

7.2.3 Business Management: John Vaughan

The committee received and noted the Business Management: John Vaughan External Examiner Report and Response Form 2021-22.

7.2.4 Business Management: Aruna Ranasinghe

The committee received and noted the Business Management: Aruna Ranasinghe External Examiner Report and Response Form 2021-22.

7.2.5 LLB Law: Richard Lang

The committee received and noted the LLB Law: Richard Lang External Examiner Report and Response Form 2021-22.

A comment was raised concerning a negative comment received from the External Examiner with regard to feedback given to students. It was noted that this comment had been extensively investigated and there was no evidence to corroborate the claim made by the External Examiner.

Notwithstanding the QAEC followed the procedure and agreed on an action plan to address the comment made and submitted it to UoN for consideration alongside our response to the report. It was also noted that the Head of Quality enquired whether representation could be made to qualify the statements made by the External Examiner. There was no response received from UoN to date.

A discussion followed as to whether we should publish the External Examiner Reports and Response Forms on our website. The committee agreed that the reports should only be published for the degrees we actively recruit for.

7.2.6 LLB Law: Mohammad Alramahi

The committee received and noted the LLB Law: Mohammad Alramahi External Examiner Report and Response Form 2021-22.

Part 3: Standing items.

8.0 Internal Student Complaints

There were no student complaints.

9.0 Confirmed minutes from other forums or committees for information, consideration or action.

9.1 SMLT: 7 September 2022

The committee received and noted the September SMLT minutes. There were no actions referred to AC.

9.2 SMLT: 5 October 2022

The committee received and noted the October SMLT minutes. There were no actions referred to AC.

9.3 QAEC: 21 September 2022

The committee received and noted the September QAEC minutes. There were no actions referred to AC.

9.4 QAEC: 19 October 2022

The committee received and noted the October QAEC minutes. There were no actions referred to AC.

9.5 BoD: 22 July 2022

The committee received and noted the July BoD minutes. There were no actions referred to AC.

9.6 Accounting and Financial Management Course Committee: 22 February 2022

The committee received and noted the Semester 2 AFM Course Committee minutes. There were no actions referred to AC.

9.7 Business Management Course Committee: 25 February 2022

The committee received and noted the Semester 2 BM Course Committee minutes. There were no actions referred to AC.

9.8 Foundation Year Course Committee: 21 February 2022

The committee received and noted the Semester 2 FY Course Committee minutes. There were no actions referred to AC.

9.9 LLB Law Course Committee: 23 February 2022

The committee received and noted the Semester 2 LLB Course Committee minutes. There were no actions referred to AC.

10.0 Actions referred from other forums/committees where the minutes are unconfirmed/not yet available.

10.1 SMLT: 2 November 2022

There were no actions referred to AC.

10.2 QAEC: 16 November 2022

There were no actions referred to AC.

10.3 Board of Directors: 7 October 2022

There were no actions referred to AC.

10.4 Accounting and Financial Management Course Committee: 10 November 2022

There were no actions referred to AC.

10.5 Business Management Course Committee: 10 November 2022

There were no actions referred to AC.

10.6 Foundation Year Course Committee: 11 November 2022

There were no actions referred to AC.

10.7 LLB Law Course Committee: 11 November 2022

There were no actions referred to AC.

Part 4: Joint meeting of the Academic Committee and the Board of Directors

For Approval

The following additional members of the Board of Directors and the staff representatives on the Board were present at the meeting:

Name	Designation
Carol Cook	Non-Executive Director (Chair of the Board of Directors)
Keith Bartlett	Non-Executive Director
Melanie Fellowes	Non-Executive Director
Abdul Pisavadi	Non-Executive Director
Shabnam Karim	Finance Director
Trevor Bolton	Non-Executive Director
Graeme Slater	Head of Action Planning
Charlayne Lewis-Thomas	Staff Representative (Admissions Manager)

11.0 Corporate and Academic Governance Review

J Fairhurst explained that following the internal and external review of our corporate and academic governance arrangements undertaken in 2020 and 2021 respectively, an Internal Review Stage 1 (informed by the previous reviews) took place to make changes to the Corporate and Academic Governance Framework (CAGF) and the Articles of Association. Internal Review Stage 2 would take place in the first part of 2023, culminating in the submission of a final review proposal to the Academic Committee and Board of Directors at their joint meeting in May 2023.

The changes proposed through the Internal Review Stage 1 were as follows:

- To incorporate changes to reflect changes to the Senior Management and Leadership Team that will be replaced by a Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and Senior Management Team (SMT).
- To introduce an Access and Participation Committee as a sub-committee of the SMT.
- To make changes to the ToR and Membership of the Academic Committee, Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.
- To incorporate some additional minor changes.

Articles of Association

J Fairhurst further explained that any amendments to the Articles require the shareholders' approval by special resolution (in accordance with Regulation 147 of the Articles).

Some provisions of the Articles are entrenched, to ensure they cannot be amended solely by the shareholders. In order to amend these entrenched provisions, a different procedure has to be followed. There are two procedures: Level 1 Entrenchment (in accordance with Regulation 148 of the Articles) and Level 2 Entrenchment (in accordance with Regulation 149 of the Articles).

Level 1 entrenchment requires the approval of the Board of Directors, followed by the approval of the shareholders by special resolution.

J Fairhurst noted that Level 1 entrenchment does not require affirmation from the Academic Committee but invited any comments on changes subject to Level 1 entrenchment for consideration by the Directors when approving the changes made. There were no comments offered for consideration.

Level 2 entrenchment requires the approval of the Board of Directors, followed by affirmation by the Academic Committee, followed by the approval of the shareholders by special resolution.

J Fairhurst outlined the proposed amendments to Regulations that were subject to Level 2 entrenchment, and therefore require the approval of the Board of Directors and affirmation by the Academic Committee. The proposed changes were as follows:

- Regulation 52 – Replace “Managing Director” with “Principal and Chief Executive Officer”
- Regulation 140 – To state that the CAGF will be reviewed “periodically” rather than “annually”
- Regulation 144 – amendment to reflect changes to the CUC Higher Education Code of Governance
- Other additional minor changes

The Board members **approved** the proposed changes, and the Academic Committee unanimously **affirmed** the changes approved by the Board of Directors.

Corporate and Academic Governance Framework

Only changes to Section 3 of the CAGF were considered in the joint meeting. Any amendments to academic governance arrangements must be approved by the Board of Directors and ratified by the Academic Committee.

J Fairhurst outlined the proposed changes, and it was noted that amendments to ToR and memberships of the Academic Committee, QAEC, SSCF and Course Committees were the major changes made. In addition, there were changes made to the membership of the SALT and references to REC were removed.

Following careful consideration of changes, some corrections were requested that relate to the consistency of entries across the document. The committee also queried the representation of research on the Academic Committee, and it was noted that the personnel involved in research leadership were already incorporated into the membership.

A further query related to having a representative of our awarding bodies sitting on our committees. Given there is no such requirement from our awarding partners, the joint meeting agreed to remove the representation of our awarding bodies from the memberships of the QAEC and AC.

Subject to minor amendment Section 3 of the CAGF was **approved** by the BoD and the approval was **ratified** by the AC. The finalised CAGF would be submitted to the January meetings of the AC and BoD to evidence the changes made.

12.0 KPIs 2022-23

In the absence of A Junaid, J Fairhurst presented the draft KPIs 2022-23 document and explained that only the wording of the KPIs would be subject to approval at this meeting before the finalised document would be presented to the BoD in January.

J Fairhurst invited the attendees to consider the proposed Institutional KPIs and it was noted that the Institutional KPIs were strongly aligned with the conditions of registration set out by the OfS. There were minor recommendations made for amendments and those would be passed to the document lead.

Following a discussion on the Academic KPIs it was recommended to split the KPIs 10b and 11a and 12b into UG and PG-specific KPIs. This will allow for a better overview and understanding of the student's performance.

A discussion followed on how to measure, evaluate and report the KPIs, and it was recommended to share any proposals with M Jackson who would pass them on to A Junaid and G Slater for consideration together with any amendments offered by the attendees.

The committee **approved** the KPIs 2022-23, subject to minor amendments.

Actions: M Jackson to pass any recommended amendments to the KPIs 2022-23 to A Junaid and G Slater.

G Slater to amend the KPIs 2022-23 based on feedback from the meeting for approval at the January 2023 Board meeting.

For consideration and action

13.0 Annual Quality Report

J Fairhurst informed the committee that the consideration of the Annual Quality Report would be deferred to the January meeting. He explained that this decision has been made following a discussion between the Board members where expectations concerning the report were considered.

The Annual Quality Report would be submitted to the January meeting of the Board of Directors and any queries arising would be forwarded to the Academic Committee for consideration at its January meeting.

14.0 Key Performance Indicators 2021-22: November 2022 update

In the absence of A Junaid, J Fairhurst presented the KPIs 2021-22 November update.

KPI 13 - 33% of our graduates were in SOC 1-3 and/or postgraduate study in 2019-20 (our last census period) compared with a target of 50%.

J Fairhurst informed the committee that the OfS has broadened its definition of successful progression outcomes (which would now include taking a year out or taking on carer duties, for example) now that it has published the thresholds for Condition B3. It was noted that this particular metric only applies to UK-domiciled students.

A query was raised concerning the figures provided in the report. Namely, whether the report was saying that 33% of our students were in SOC 1-3 and/or postgraduate studies or whether 33% of 30 students were in the same.

It was requested to include information on how many students were in the pool of graduating students, how many of those students had responded to the Graduate Outcomes Survey, and how many of those who responded reported that they were in SOC 1-3 and/or postgraduate studies. J Fairhurst agreed that clarification was required. He also asked that (a) if the outcome data proves to indicate a cause for concern, information on what is being done in this area be provided to the Academic Committee and Board of Directors and (b) that information on the source of the data

also be provided as it appears to be different from the UK Performance Indicators published by HESA and the OfS' own indicators.

Following a discussion, it was flagged that the 2019-20 graduating cohort would have been impacted heavily by Covid-19 and that it was important to bear that in mind when considering the metrics.

The committee considered the Academic KPIs relating to the Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25 due for review in November 2022. M Jackson presented the updates and highlighted the following key points:

- We have an extremely positive outcome for new BAME students continuing from 2021-22 to 2022-23, but the same is not true of our other target groups. However, cohort sizes were small.
- Attainment outcomes were mixed, but these are areas we are working on.

The committee noted the update and found the deviation from the target in the outcomes reported of no concern in light of the small cohort size.

Action: A Junaid to clarify the information provided in the update to KPI 13 as advised by the committee, and to ensure that the Academic Committee and Board of Directors are provided with information on what is being done in this area should the outcome data indicate a cause for concern.

15.0 Strategic Framework Final Update on Actions 2021-22

Documents received:

15.1 Strategic Framework Actions 2021-22 Summary Report

15.2 Strategic Framework Actions 2021-22 Full Report

The committee received and noted the reports on Strategic Framework Actions 2021-22.

It was noted that 70.63% of actions were already completed, 11.89% were partially completed and 17.48% were not completed. The actions that were not completed within 2021-22, and whether they would be carried forward to 2022-23 or will be discontinued.

16.0 Office for Students

16.1 OfS Compliance Register – November 2022 Update Report

M Jackson presented the OfS Compliance Register November 2022 Update Report, highlighting the following key points:

- Section 2 provides a positive compliance statement and key updates since the October 2022 update report.
- Given that this is the last iteration of this particular report before we are likely to move to a new approach for monitoring compliance with our Conditions of Registration (subject to approval by the Board - an agenda item for their November 2022 meeting), a new Section 3 has been added to the document. Section 3 lists those actions that relevant leads will now need to include within their reporting on

OfS Conditions of Registration going forward for 2022-23 either because of delays in completion or because of changes to OfS submission dates.

The OfS Compliance Register – November 2022 Update Report was received and noted by the committee.

16.2 OfS Condition A1 Action Plan – November 2022 Update Report

M Jackson presented the OfS Condition A1 Action Plan November 2022 Update Report and highlighted the following key points:

- We are compliant with the Financial Support Strategic Measures and Other Strategic Measures and Commitments and are assumed to be compliant with Strategic Measures 2, 3, 4, and 6.
- With regard to Strategic Measure 1 relating to the Pre-entry Course for students without a Level 3 qualification, we completed the 5 actions resulting in delivery of the course (albeit to a much smaller cohort than envisaged). However, we have been unable to complete the remaining actions relating to the evaluation of the Pre-entry course and a decision on whether or not to make it a compulsory component of our admissions process as none of the prospective students who attended the pilot pre-entry course subsequently enrolled as FY students for September 2021. As a result, the Access and Participation Committee (APC) has concluded that full compliance with this Strategic Measure 1 will not be feasible.
- With regard to Strategic Measure 5 relating to Flexible Timetables, the Head of Operations and Strategic Planning has advised that full compliance with this particular Measure will not be feasible. As a result, the Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion produced a report on this measure for consideration by the APC at its November 2022 meeting. The APC agreed not to pursue any of the outstanding actions supporting Strategic Measure 5, recognising that they were no longer appropriate or implementable. However, it was agreed that the Committee would consider the possibility of us pursuing alternative timetabling initiatives based on research to be undertaken by SEER into sector practices.

The OfS Condition A1 Action Plan – November 2022 Update Report was received and noted by the committee.

17.0 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

17.1 EDI Update Report: October 2022

The EDI update Report for October 2022 was received and noted by the committee.

17.2 EDI Update Report: November 2022

The EDI update Report for November 2022 was received and noted by the committee.

For information

18.0 Corporate Report: November 2022

The Corporate Report: November 2022 update was received and noted by the committee.

J Fairhurst remarked that the document's title may no longer serve its purpose and would be considered for renaming.

19.0 Student Recruitment and Admissions 2022-23

J Fairhurst informed the committee that the way in which data pertinent to student recruitment and admissions was collated and reported on to best serve the intended purpose at any meeting.

He carried on to report as follows with regard to the recruitment of new students to our October 2022 intake:

- We had received a total of 2,849 applications and 1,513 had been processed.
- For international applicants who require a student visa, we received 2,648 applications and 1,315 had been processed.
- For home applicants and international applicants who do not require a student visa, we received 201 applications and 198 had been processed.

J Fairhurst explained that Bloomsbury Institute had incorporated its own company in India (Bloomsbury Institute India Private Limited) and that it had opened an office in Hyderabad, India.

The India Office is now responsible for processing all applications for international applicants who require a student visa. The India Office will process applications to the point of being ready to be issued with a CAS. Responsibility for the issuing of the CAS will remain with our London-based UKVI Compliance Team. Once an international applicant has been made an unconditional offer, they are now provided with access to CAS Shield. It is through CAS Shield that applicants submit additional documentation and financial details, in order to be assessed for CAS eligibility. We also have the facility to conduct automated interviews within CAS Shield and have implemented this for some high risk countries.

Once the CAS has been issued, Registry is responsible for setting dates for face-to-face enrolment and induction; both of these activities take place during the Welcome Week scheduled a week before the course start date.

The London-based Admissions team are responsible for the processing of applications for home applicants and applicants who do not require a student visa.

It was noted that we are still facing challenges in recruiting home students and international students who do not require a student visa.

For the October 2022 intake, we recruited 77 home students/students who do not require a student visa compared to 422 international students who require a student visa.

With regards to continuing students, of 228 who were eligible to re-enrol in October 2022, 213 were re-enrolled (including Sept 21 – Jan 22); 15 students failed to re-enrol.

The committee flagged that there is no data for the February intake. It was suggested that it would be useful for this to be included, to see whether recruitment is on track.

It was stated that the February intake would see an increase in the number of MBA/MSc students because we have paused the recruitment of undergraduate students from the Indian subcontinent. It was also stated that new initiatives and marketing strategies have been developed and are being implemented to attract students within the home market, and this includes our use of social media and paid campaigns.

20.0 APP Assessment of Performance Update

20.1 APP Assessment of Performance Update

M Jackson presented the Access and Participation Plan Assessment of Performance Update, explaining that, unlike the previous version that had been circulated earlier in the year, this version now also includes disaggregated data to track the performance of students on our 4-year degrees with an FY. In addition, some new commentary has been added in relation to the original aggregated data.

M Jackson reported that we have eliminated the significant attainment gaps reported in our APP and some of the significant continuation gaps. The latter include continuation gaps in relation to BAME students, Black students and students with a disability. The remaining gaps are in relation to students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2. However, some additional significant gaps have emerged from a gender and gender/socioeconomic perspective. M Jackson added that the data will be revisited in January/February 2023 as we will need to start developing our new APP which is due for submission in 2023.

21.0 Committee Handbook 2022-23

The Committee received and noted the Committee Handbook 2022-23 as approved by the SMLT.

It was stated that the Committee Handbook would provide guidance to committee members to help them perform well in their roles to support our governance arrangements. The Committee Handbook had been circulated to committee members and can be accessed through the Quality Communication SharePoint site.

22.0 Redaction Policy and Procedures

The Committee received and noted the Redaction Policy and Procedures.

The document would be used to set out our approach to sharing the minutes of meetings internally and externally.

23.0 TDAP and Glyndŵr University

We are still awaiting the final decision with regard to our TDAP application.

Part 5: Any Other Business

24.0 Any Other Business

- S Bailey reminded the committee that our graduation ceremony would take place on 2 December and invited everyone who would like to attend to contact SEWS.
- J Fairhurst informed the Committee that A Krajewska and A Junaid would be leaving Bloomsbury Institute. He expressed his gratitude for their contribution to Bloomsbury Institute over the years and wished them every success in their future endeavours.

The Committee members also expressed their gratitude and good wishes for the future.

Part 6: Date/Time of Next Meeting

25.0 Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting: 25 January 2023, 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm, Venue to be confirmed